[Mr. R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliyar] [8th August 1929

The House will probably be aware that irrigation and rainfall conditions differ from place to place in these districts. Taking the Kistna district, for instance, the conditions in one taluk are quite different from those in another, in the matter of rainfall and irrigation conditions, etc. In the opinion of the Committee, it was therefore necessary that the distribution of the villages to be taken up either for the detailed economic enquiry or for the enquiry into the agricultural indebtedness should be fairly even. For these reasons it will be apparent that the amount of work the Committee have decided should be done, will be very much more than what was contemplated at the beginning of the operations, when the Committee was not in a position to know exactly how much work would have to be done to enable it to come to satisfactory conclusions and to make a report to the Government. The Committee have so far completed its preliminary enquiry into the conditions of the villages taken up for detailed economic enquiry and it has also completed the final enquiry in villages taken up in the Kistna district. There remains yet the enquiry to be conducted into the economic conditions of the villages of the East and West Godavari districts. The Committee also propose to examine a few of the prominent individuals in each of the districts
12 noon. besides the officials, for instance, officials of the Public Health Department, and the Agricultural Department, and a few others. All this work yet remains to be done and, considering the time at the disposal of the Committee according to the resolution of this House, the Committee is found rather reluctantly to come before the House to ask for some more time. As I have already explained, the Committee has done all that is humanly possible to get through the work as early as possible and as rapidly as possible. In spite of all that, it is not possible to finish the work considering the short time at the disposal of the Committee and considering the volume of work with which we are faced. Therefore we propose to ask for an extension of time. For these reasons, I propose that this resolution be agreed to by the House."

Mr. B. Ramachandra Reddi :—" I second the resolution, Sir."

The motion was put to the House and carried.

IV

MOTIONS ON MATTERS OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST.

COMPOSITION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

*Mr. J. A. Saldanha :—" Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move—

'*That this Council recommends to the Government that the Finance Committee annually appointed in pursuance of the resolution of the Council passed at its meeting on 1st April 1921 shall consist in addition to the three nominated members of whom one shall be the Finance Member of Government, of eight members to be elected by the Council according to the method of the single transferable vote.*'

"Sir, in this connexion I may refer to the proceedings of the meeting of the Legislative Council on 1st April 1921 at which the hon. Sir Charles Todhunter, the then Finance Member of Government, moved for the appointment of the Finance Committee. He then proposed that the number should be 9, six of whom to be elected and three to be nominated. There was also a motion brought forward at that time by my hon. Friend, Mr. P. Siva Rao,

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who proposed that the number should be 12, but the then Finance Member opposed the motion for want of notice Otherwise that motion for increasing the number to 12 would probably not have been withdrawn and would have been discussed and passed. My reasons for increasing the number to 11—that is, three nominated and eight elected members—are these. The purposes for which the Finance Committee was appointed are described in the speech of the Mover on the 1st of April 1921, namely, first to scrutinize proposals of new expenditure and advise whether they should be accepted, etc. The second function was to go into the economics in regard to expenditure and whether retrenchment could be made, etc.

[At this stage Dr. (Mrs.) S. Muthulakshmi Reddi, Deputy President, occupied the chair.]

"I think that the present number of nine is not quite adequate to carry on the heavy duties of providing for expenditure and of seeing whether economies can be effected and whether retrenchment can be made in the various departments and whether unnecessary wastage can be avoided. It is intended to divide the work among a number of sub-committees, as it is not possible for every member to examine in detail all questions of expenditure. Considering the amount of work turned out in the Finance Committee, I wonder whether every member could devote as much attention as is required, because the subjects are so many. I have never found anywhere, in any of the reports of the Finance Committee so far, any proposal for retrenchment or economy. I therefore think that sub-committees will be necessary to examine the various questions. I therefore propose that the present number be increased by two. It is a very modest proposal. I think this question would have been accepted by Government in 1921 if Mr. Siva Rao had given timely notice, and it is high time that we should effect economies in our expenditure and it is therefore necessary that the number of members should be increased. I am sure this proposal will meet with the approval of the hon. the Finance Member as well as of the House."

* Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar :—"Madam, I have very great pleasure in seconding this motion. I hope the Government will accept it. One of the chief reasons for my supposition is that the strength of the Council has been recently increased. Every year we see that whenever the elections take place, there is a large number of candidates coming up for this Committee. This shows that Members are quite willing to work and are willing to co-operate with the Government and so their services should not be thrown away by Government. We have also seen Government expressing gratification at the good work readily done at great sacrifice by the members of the various Committees and that also goes to show that the Members of this Council deserve better treatment and a larger representation. On this ground, Madam, I hope Government will accept this proposal."

* Mr. K. V. R. Swami :—"Madam, I have much pleasure in supporting this motion, because it will add to the strength of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is a small body but the work to be turned out by that body is voluminous and various subjects are brought before the Committee in a very short time. Seven days' notice is given for the study of a number of subjects that come before the Committee and the volume of work is such that it is hardly possible for members to get through in such short time. If the number of members is

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increased, there may be chances for the members to divide the work among themselves and help each other in studying the subjects. Anyhow, I may bring to the notice of the Council that the character of this Committee is only of an advisory nature and the decisions of this Committee are not binding on the Government. Wherever it suits their purpose they accept the advice given and wherever it does not suit them, they do not care for the advice or opinion of this body. If it is made a practice that the advice given by the Finance Committee is accepted by the Government it will facilitate work, as it may not be possible for the Council to go into all the details in certain matters as such things will be looked into at the Committee stage. At present the Committee consists of six elected members and three nominated members. So far as my experience goes, I always wished that the number were more, so that the work may be done better. It is true that these matters are looked into by Government officers and of course so much trouble is taken in the office. But the office does not care for the policy or the utility of the matter. This House is responsible for matters that come before it. It is very essential that the number should be increased to enable members to go into all the details of expenditure. It is also quite patent that this House consists of so many parties and that all the parties should have representation on the Finance Committee. With these words, I support the motion of my hon. Friend."

* Mr. K. Koti Reddi :—" Madam, Deputy President, I have very great pleasure in supporting this resolution. Of all the committees that are appointed by this House, the Finance Committee is a very important one and the claim made by my hon. Friend to increase the number of elected members from six to eight is a very modest one and I believe that the hon. the Finance Member will agree to this proposal. It is in the Finance Committee that many questions involving expenditure and policies are frankly and freely discussed. From my experience I have found that usually the Government are free and frank in their discussions at the Finance Committee and it is consequently easy for us to suggest policies and clear the several doubts on various topics which sometimes occur. Although the Finance Committee is a purely advisory body, it is usual that ordinarily no item of expenditure which has been rejected by the Finance Committee is brought forward before this House by Government. And as such one realizes how the Finance Committee is a very important body. Besides from the way in which the budget discussions go on we always find that nearly one-half of the items of expenditure that are budgeted are generally voted upon en bloc in the House, for we rarely find time to discuss all the items in this House; and the only opportunity of discussing those items is before the Finance Committee. That being so, it is necessary that this Committee should be as representative a body of this House as possible. At present the elected number on the Committee is by no means large. And although it is necessary that a Committee of this kind should not be too large, eleven I think is a reasonable number, and I hope the hon. the Finance Member will not oppose the motion."

12-15 p.m.

Mr. P. Siva Rao :—" I have great pleasure in supporting the motion. The object of the hon. Member who has moved this resolution is to give expression to the feeling that the present strength of the Committee should be increased. Even in the year 1921 I had the honour of moving an amendment for increasing the total strength of the Finance Committee

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to 12. And I then quoted as a precedent the state of things under the Minto-Morley Scheme of Reforms when we had 12 members—6 officials and 6 non-officials—on the Committee. And now I may say the responsibilities of the Finance Committee have increased much more and I may also say that the present number of elected members, viz., six is too inadequate to afford representation to all the interests and even to the groups of all the districts. Now it is well known that many momentous questions, sometimes very important questions, come up for consideration before the Finance Committee. They have to revise and frame the budget practically; every new scheme comes up before them for consideration. I think the time has come in view of the increased responsibility that we should strengthen the Committee up to 12. But the hon. Mover is satisfied if the non-official elected element is increased to eight so that total ex-officio, nominated and the elected members, would come to 11. I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion."

*The hon. Sir THOMAS MOIR:—"Madam, I have listened with great attention to the arguments advanced for this resolution. The hon. mover of the resolution went back to find support for it to the proceedings of 1921, and he there found that when this Committee was originally appointed, Mr. Siva Rao moved a belated motion to the effect that it should consist of 12. That motion was not accepted. As the hon. the Leader of the House said on that occasion, the number which had been put down was the result of a very careful discussion in the Cabinet. There was very little debate on that occasion and that particular motion was opposed by Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar to whom I am prepared in this matter to give quite as much weight as to Mr. Siva Rao. He said :

'I beg to oppose the amendment. So far as the number 9 is concerned, it will be very convenient . . .'

and then he added :

'and it is in accordance with the old tradition, the famous tradition of *Navagraham*.'

"Now, I am not aware of anything which has occurred during the last eight years to raise any doubt as to the soundness of the one argument to which I will pay attention, namely, that of convenience. Mr. Saldanha summarised the two functions of the Finance Committee, to scrutinize proposals for expenditure and also to deal with the question of economy. So little does he know of the functions and the working of the Finance Committee that he said that he had never heard of the Finance Committee doing anything in regard to the question of retrenchment. Might I point out to him that at the beginning of the Reforms, when our finances were in a precarious condition, the Finance Committee constituted a Retrenchment Committee which produced a very long detailed and valuable report. I think the hon. Member might have refreshed his memory a little more on the subject before he urged that as one of the reasons why the Finance Committee should be altered. Another argument used was that the Finance Committee had an immense amount of work to do and that in a short time. May I say that no increase to the Finance Committee can possibly get away from the element of time? All the work has to be completed within a limited number of days and the budget programme has to be strictly followed and from that point of view it does not matter whether the Finance Committee consists of 5 or 9 or 12. They will have to do the work in exactly the same time. I would suggest that the larger the number of

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members the more difficult their task in that respect will become. One hon. Member suggested that they should split up the work. But, that would do away with the whole concept of the constitution of the Committee. The Finance Committee as a general body of representatives of this House has to give its opinions on those points or those schemes which come before it. It will be no use to divide the Finance Committee into two or three sub-committees. Their recommendation will no longer carry weight, the weight that we attach to the opinions of the full Committee."

Mr. K. V. R. Swami :—" On a point of personal explanation. I never said that the Finance Committee should be split up and the subjects be divided. All that I said was that if the number was more, perhaps the members may take up certain subjects for specialization and help one another. It was not my idea that the Committee should be divided into sub-committees and decide the matters coming before them."

* The hon. Sir Thomas Moir :—" At any rate the idea is the same, the creation of informal sub-committees. I was suggesting that that was entirely opposed to the original constitution of the Finance Committee. Then, the same hon. Member, Mr. Swami, made a complaint that the Finance Committee was only advisory. I do not know whether he recommended that it should be given powers. It is no good complaining of the Committee. It must be either advisory or be given absolute powers. And I ask what Government could hand over its functions of framing the budget to a Committee? There is of course such a thing as government by committees, but it is not the one which is in operation in this House. And no Government could accept the proposal that they should abrogate their functions and hand them over to the Finance Committee. But let me say that this advisory power is so acknowledged that it is only with great hesitation that the Government enters in the budget a scheme which has been rejected or deferred for further consideration by the Finance Committee. And I venture to say that the records of the House would amply prove that assertion. Then, Mr. Koti Reddi, I think, showed himself under a misapprehension as to the position of the Finance Committee. He referred to it as formulating policies. That is not the function of the Finance Committee. The Committee's functions are critical. It has to express its opinion and pass its criticisms on the financial policy or proposals as formulated by the Government. I wish to make that quite clear. And, as I said, I do not know that there is anything in the history of the last eight years which would suggest that the Finance Committee as constituted has failed of its function. Personally I have more than once paid a tribute to the work on the Finance Committee. I think it has functioned admirably and personally I see no reasons to change its composition. But that is with regard to the existing order of things and the question may arise whether any change should be made in the future. Might I point out to the House here that it is very doubtful if the Finance Committee will in future be part of the machinery of this House. If as many of us expect and some of us hope we are reaching as the next stage in the provincial reforms at the development of a ministry without any official element to be in charge of the affairs of the House, a ministry—I believe there is no Parliamentary precedent for it—which is holding that responsibility will not be prepared to subject its budget, which is usually where full Parliamentary Government is in force kept a strict secret until the day it is presented, to subject

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that budget to a Committee of the House. It seems to me therefore, that the Finance Committee while an admirable and perfectly logical expedient at the time of transition from one form of government to another, is not likely to maintain that position in the machinery of the future, and I would ask whether there is any real reason why now after it has been functioning for something like nine years for the next year, or it should be two years at the most, we should discuss or carry out any alteration in its composition."

* Mr. K. R. KARANT :—" I am surprised at the last argument of the hon. the Finance Member as to why we should have this addition after nine years. I may give him only one forcible reason and that is just the reason advanced by this Government for rushing through the Service Commission Bill after nine years when there is just one more year for the reforms to expire. I hope he will be satisfied with that answer. In fact, Madam, I am surprised at the opposition of the hon. the Finance Member for such a resolution as this. I for one having been on that Committee for one year, am not over-enthusiastic about its functions. Because I think at best it is a Committee used just to canvass some votes on the Government side. If 12-30 p.m. really there is a serious opposition to its proposals, such objections are all brushed aside, and without much ceremony they are brought forward in the budget before the House. In fact I was surprised to find one proposal which was withdrawn in the Finance Committee included in the last budget. When the question of a Labour Officer for Malabar was placed before the Finance Committee in January last, the then Labour Commissioner said that he was not satisfied with the staff which had been given him and Government withdrew the proposal. But ultimately I found it was incorporated in the budget. Two or three proposals having far-reaching effect on the finances of this province may also be referred to, i.e., the question of temperance propaganda at a cost of 4 lakhs a year and the question of the reorganization of the Agricultural Department at a recurring cost of about 4 lakhs a year and a capital expenditure of about 17 lakhs. There is also the question of increasing the salaries of the mufassal sergeants. All these questions were discussed and thrown out by the Finance Committee in January last, and one and all of them, on which the Government was very keen, were brought forward in this Council. As hon. Members know questions are decided not upon the merits of the case, but on account of certain party understandings. They are so voted upon, not on their merits, but simply because they are party motions and any opposition would amount to the throwing out of the Ministry. So all these proposals, though they have much far-reaching effect on the finances of the province, and are not really beneficial, were still passed. It is immaterial, Madam, whether the number in the Finance Committee is 6, 7 or 8 or any other number, but I say that if really important and tangible work is to be done by this Finance Committee, there should be no change in its membership from year to year. What happens is that every year there is a new set of members who hardly know what happened in the previous year, and the Government always takes advantage of this new set of members to bring up proposals before them which were thrown out by the previous Finance Committee. Therefore, whatever may happen to this resolution, one need not think that anything very serious is going to happen. I am only surprised that the hon. the Finance Member should oppose a small motion like this which proposes to add only two members to the Finance Committee. Heavens will

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not come down if the motion is adopted. In fact, if we had proposed the cutting down of two members from the present strength, he would have probably opposed that motion."

* Mr. J. A. SALDANHA :—" Madam, in reply to the hon. the Finance Member's objections to my proposal, I may briefly point out that the Finance Committee during the pre-reform years consisted of 12 members, as has been pointed out by my hon. Friend Mr. Siva Rao. And it was reduced to 9 and I do not know what were the serious reasons which induced the Government to so reduce the number. Those reasons were not given before the Council. The number 9 had some enchantment for Mr. Srinivasa Ayyangar at that time, and he might have probably thought that that number would be analogous to Navagrahas. Whatever the reason may be, the motion to increase the number to 12 made in 1921 was withdrawn by my hon. Friend Mr. Siva Rao because it was objected to for want of notice. It was not discussed and put to the House. And I am sure it would have been passed if it was put before the House, in spite of the objections of the Government.

" Now, as for the increase in the number, it is pointed out that such increase will not affect very much the deliberations of the Finance Committee or its output of work. It was pointed out to me by some friends that the present number of six elected members was too small altogether. It was also mentioned by some of my hon. Friends that the different parties in the House were not adequately represented on the Finance Committee and that some were not represented at all. I considered it very important that the interests of the different parties in the Council should be represented on the Finance Committee. So I thought it best to increase the number of elected members to 8. I should have proposed more, but I was content to increase the total strength to 11. Eleven has as much charm as 9, although 13 has no charm for us because it is considered an unlucky number. So I put the figure at 11.

" Then, as to the period for which the Finance Committee is to function and as to the point raised by the Finance Member that under the new reforms the Finance Committee would not be needed, I may say this. I am sure hon. Members will agree that this Committee will be more needed after the new reforms than it is at present, because there will be then, as now, elected Members, many more of them, and the different interests will require, and naturally the Ministers will require, a Finance Committee to check the figures and prepare the budget estimate. Who will prepare the budget estimate ? The Ministers cannot do it and they will require a Finance Committee for that purpose. At present it consists of elected and nominated members, but in future it will consist wholly of elected members. Such a Committee may consist of 11, 15 or more. At present it is a mere advisory body. But in future the Ministers will be elected Members without much of professional or administrative experience, and surely they will need the assistance of the Finance Committee. There will be conflicting claims of different departments, and how can they be settled without a Committee ? So, the Finance Committee will be all the more needed then than at present. At least in this transitional stage, I think it is advisable for us to have a Finance Committee with increased strength. Who knows if the reforms will

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come soon, and, as matters stand, this Council has two or three more years to function, and why should not the Finance Committee for the next three years consist of eleven members instead of nine? This is a very small change that is suggested. It is not like the Public Service Commission which costs some lakhs to the tax-payer. The hon. the Finance Member asked why should the Finance Committee be divided into sub-committees like so many water-tight compartments? Because there are so many subjects which have to be studied by the members of the Finance Committee, it is better that sub-committees formed out of the Finance Committee take up different departments and study them, so that they can explain the circumstances to the whole Finance Committee when they next meet together. It has also been said that the Finance Committee as amended would not consist of sufficient number of members to form sub-committees out of it. Why? There would be eleven members; one official member and three members can form one sub-committee; and so there can be three sub-committees."

The hon. Sir Thomas Moir:—"May I say, Madam, that there is only one official member altogether."

Mr. J. A. Saldanha:—"As a rule, I think Government will nominate members who are in their confidence. So, one nominated member and three elected members can divide themselves into one sub-committee, so that there can be three sub-committees. These sub-committees may meet on the first day and study the various problems entrusted to them and report to the full Finance Committee on the next day when there is a full meeting. For one man to go and sift the figures and read all the connected papers is difficult and it may also be a waste of time. So, why not have a subdivision of labour? The individual members forming the sub-committees will be of better help to one another than they are now, for I have found from experience that we were given too much material and too many papers to study, so far as individual members are concerned. The subdivision of labour in the sub-committees will be very conducive to the practical working of the Committee. Therefore I would appeal to the House and to the hon. the Finance Member to let this motion be passed, because it is not a very controversial subject after all. I first wanted to bring it up in connexion with the Standing Orders, on a representation made by some friends that the number of elected members in the Finance Committee should be increased. But it was pointed out to me that the Finance Committee was not constituted under the Standing Orders, but under a resolution of this House like the one which was passed in 1921. I would appeal to the House to consider this question as a modest one, as a useful one and a good one."

The hon. the Deputy President:—"The question is

'*That this Council recommends to the Government that the Finance Committee annually appointed in pursuance of the resolution of the Council passed at its meeting on 1st April 1921 shall consist, in addition to the three nominated members of whom one shall be the Finance Member of Government, of eight members to be elected by the Council according to the method of the single transferable vote.*'"

The motion was declared lost.

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12-45 p.m. Mr. G. Harisarvottama Rao demanded a poll, and the House divided thus:

Ayes.

1. Mr. P. C. Venkatapathi Raju.
2. ,, K. Koti Reddi.
3. ,, R. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
4. ,, S. Satyamurti.
5. ,, C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar.
6. ,, J. A. Saldanha.
7. ,, G. Harisarvottama Rao.
8. ,, C. S. Govindaraja Mudaliyar.
9. ,, Abdul Hameed Khan.
10. ,, K. V. R. Swami.
11. ,, D. Narayana Raju.
12. ,, K. R. Karant.
13. ,, K. Madhavan Nayar.
14. ,, P. Anjaneyulu.
15. ,, A. Parasarama Rao.
16. ,, C. Ramasomayajulu.
17. ,, T. Adinarayana Chettiyar.
18. ,, Ahmed Miran Sahib.
19. ,, K. Uppi Sahib.
20. ,, M. Narayana Rao.
21. ,, C. Marudavanam Pillai.
22. ,, K. V. Krishnaswami Nayakar.
23. ,, C. Venkatarangam Nayudu.
24. ,, B. Venkataratnam.
25. Rao Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabapathi Mudaliyar.
26. Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.
27. Diwan Bahadur R. N. Arogyaswami Mudaliyar.
28. Mr. Ramanath Goenka.
29. ,, K. P. Raman Menon.
30. ,, R. Nagan Gowda.
31. ,, C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar.
32. ,, T. C. Srinivasa Ayyangar.
33. ,, Chavadi K. Subrahmanya Pillai.
34. ,, C. Gopala Menon.
35. ,, B. Ramachandra Reddi.
36. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro.
37. Diwan Bahadur P. C. Ethirajulu Nayudu.
38. Mr. P. T. Rajan.
39. ,, Kadir Mohideen Sahib.
40. Diwan Bahadur S. Kumaraswami Reddiyar.
41. Khan Sahib T. M. Moidoo Sahib Bahadur.
42. Rao Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu.
43. ,, K. Sitarama Reddiyar.
44. Mr. Abdul Razaack Sahib.

Noes.

1. The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur.
2. ,, Sir Thomas Moir.
3. ,, Diwan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nayar.
4. ,, Mr. A. Y. G. Campbell.
5. ,, ,, M. R. Seturatnam Ayyar.
6. ,, ,, S. Muthiah Mudaliyar.
7. ,, Dr. P. Subbarayan.
8. Mr. Hilton Brown.
9. ,, H. A. Watson.
10. ,, A. G. Leach.
11. ,, J. Gray.
12. ,, S. V. Ramamurti.
13. ,, C. B. Cotterell.
14. ,, V. Ch. John.
15. ,, M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar.
16. ,, Syed Tajudin Sahib.
17. ,, J. Bheemayya.
18. ,, R. Foulkes.
19. ,, P. J. Gnanavaram Pillai.
20. The Muppil Nayar of Kavalappara.
21. The Zamindar of Singampatti.
22. Mr. J. Kuppuswami.
23. Subadar-Major S. A. Nanjappah Bahadur.
24. Mr. K. Krishnan.
25. ,, N. Siva Raj.
26. ,, M. V. Gangadhara Siva.
27. ,, V. I. Muniswami Pillai.
28. ,, W. P. A. Soundara Pandian.
29. ,, S. Subrahmanya Moopanar.
30. ,, Daniel Thomas.
31. ,, S. Venkiah.
32. Rao Sahib R. Srinivasan.
33. Mr. Mahmud Schamnad.
34. Khan Bahadur P. Khalif-ul-lah Sahib Bahadur.
35. Mr. G. Premayya.
36. ,, U. Ramaswami Ayyar.
37. ,, S. N. Dorai Raja.
38. ,, S. Arpudaswami Udayar.
39. The Raja of Kallikote.
40. Mr. A. J. Leech.

Ayes 44. *Noes* 40.

The resolution was carried.

TRIFURCATION OF THE RAJAHMUNDRY TALUK BOARD.

Mr. B. VENKATARATNAM moved—

'*This Council recommends to the Government that the present Rajahmundry Taluk Board be trifurcated into Amalapuram, Razole and Rajahmundry Taluk Boards contiguous with the Revenue taluks.*'

In doing so, he made a speech in Telugu and commended the resolution to the House.